

Harvard Allston Task Force
Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 14, 2006
Honan-Allston Library
6:30 p.m.

I. Attendance:

Harvard Allston Task Force

John Bruno
Cathy Campbell
John Cusack
Rita DiGesse
Brian Gibbons
Mike Hanlon
Bruce Houghton
Harry Mattison
Ray Mellone

Boston Redevelopment Authority

Gerald Autler
Linda Kowalcky

Harvard University

Luann Abrahams, Harvard University Art Museums
John Audi
Nathalie Beauvais
Aileen Connolly
Will Donham
Tom Lentz, Harvard University Art Museums
David Lewis
Kevin McCluskey
Daron Manoogian, Harvard University Art Museums
Dave Moffat
Mary Power
Alison Reinhardt
John Seager, Harvard University Art Museums
Maile Takahashi

Daly Genick Architects

Kevin Daly
Tom Perkins
Jared Ward

CBT Architects

Paul Puciata
Kevin Deabler
Rhianna Trefry

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The meeting began at 6:30 p.m.

Kevin McCluskey, Harvard University, introduced Tom Lentz, Director of Harvard University Art Museums (HUAM). Tom introduced the architectural design team for the HUAM Allston Brighton Center (formerly the Citizen Bank building at 1360/1380 Soldier's Field Road) led by Kevin Daly of Daly Genick and Associates, based out of Los Angeles and CBT Architects, based out of Boston.

Kevin Daly presented examples of his previous work and provided an update of the design status.

Summary remarks included:

- The architectural team is just getting started on the project.
- The method for coming up with the design is very process driven.
- There will be important programming aspects for the building.
- As part of his building philosophy, Kevin believes that there is an ingenious part to every building that should be reserved instead of trying to change the DNA of a building.
- To change a commercial building into an institutional building some fundamental components of the building have to change.

Questions and Comments:

Bruce Houghton asked for clarification on what Daly Genick has been charged to do. Kevin explained that Daly Genick has been charged with renovating the buildings located at 1360/1380 Soldier's Field Road for use by HUAM while the Fogg museum in Cambridge undergoes renovations.

Ray Mellone: Where will the entrance to the building be? It is important that people from the host community be able to access the building.

Kevin Daly: We realize it's important that the building relate to both Western Ave and Soldier's Field Road. This may mean that the front may not be on either Western Ave. or Soldier's Field Road.

Mike Hanlon: How does the size of this building compare to the Fogg? Will there be any different uses on the roof? The roof could provide a beautiful view to the river.

Kevin Daly: I don't have the exact number to compare the two sizes of the buildings. All of the HUAM staff at the Fogg will be moving over to this building. There will be a gallery approximately 10,000 square feet. There will also be public spaces, study rooms and rooms for direct observation. There could be gallery space or a café on the roof.

Ideas and questions surrounding the relationship between the Kinkos building and the Citizen's Bank building were discussed. Kevin Daly said as part of the renovations the Kinkos building may be demolished, another building may take its place, or it may be connected to the main building. Some Task Force members suggested taking down the Kinkos building and adding additional square footage to the bank building in order to maximize open space. Since the project is still in the beginning stages Kevin didn't have all the answers yet on what options will be pursued. The programming for the building is very complicated and some new construction will be needed.

An audience member asked whether the footprint of the building would change. If, so, he called upon the Task Force members to take note that this might result in a loss of parking.

Bruce Houghton asked for clarification of which parcel of land is designated for the renovation.

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Kevin Daly: It is likely that the footprint of the building will change. The former Citizen's Bank building, Kinkos building and Mahoney's building all fall within the parcel that Daly Genick has been charged with looking at.

Ray Mellone: Will there be any open space on the parcel?

Kevin Daly: Yes, since this is going to be an institutional building, we'll be creating a setting for an institutional building with area for a park or maybe a plaza.

Ray Mellone: If the Mahoney's building goes, there will be two larger parcels to create development. The building should open up to Western Ave and be inviting to people passing by. It should be oriented to allow people to see it and make people want to go in it.

Kevin agreed that those were the same urban design principles that the design team is working under.

Mike Hanlon: How many square feet do you anticipate the building will be?

Kevin Daly: We're anticipating 120,000 square feet.

There was some discussion regarding options for where the area for unloading and loading trucks would be located. Kevin Daly said that the design team is still looking at the site circulation schemes but none of the options involve backing in to the site off Western Ave or Soldier's Field Road.

John Bruno: What is the time frame and when will the preliminary design be ready for review?

Kevin Daly: The project is working under a tight time schedule. Preliminary schematic designs will be finished by the end of December.

Ray Mellone: Would you rather clear out the building and start fresh?

Kevin Daly: We think it is cost effective to reuse and repurpose the building.

Cathy Campbell: How long do you anticipate the construction to take place? How long until the Fogg moves into this building and then moves back out? What are Harvard's intentions for this building once the Fogg renovation is complete and the exhibits can move back to the Fogg? What are the dimensions of the second lot of the Kinko's building, how are you going to fit 120,000 square feet?

Kevin Daly: Some of the parking that is below the building now might be programmed into the area. There is no date for which the renovated Citizen's Bank building might not be used by the University as a museum.

Tom Lentz and Luann Abrahams from HUAM explained that after the Fogg renovations, many of the HUAM staff will still stay at the Citizen's Bank building. The building shouldn't be considered a "swing space" for HUAM. Tom said that Harvard and HUAM are making a sizeable investment in the site and he can imagine the building will serve that purpose for a long time. He said HUAM is still asking a lot of questions too because the program for the building still needs to be clearly defined. HUAM staff can come back to the Task Force meetings as often is needed.

Maile Takahashi clarified that this meeting was to serve as a "meet and greet" between the Task Force and Daly Genick. Daly Genick will come back to the Task Force meeting on Oct. 23rd to present its 10% design concepts.

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Maile Takahashi announced to the Task Force that geotechnical testing was scheduled to begin on the first science site. She said it would entail 2 large drilling rigs that would be onsite for two weeks. Each hole will take two days and only core samples were being collected. The drilling will be completed Monday through Friday and will not take place on Saturdays.

Bruce Houghton: The noise from the drilling will not be significant.

John Bruno: Have initial site assessments for rodents/rats been completed?

Kevin McCluskey: We don't anticipate that to be a problem with this initial drilling but Harvard will serve as a technical consultant to the city to ensure problems with rodents do not occur. Before any construction plans are approved, Harvard will present a construction mitigation plan.

Kevin informed the Task Force and audience members that Harvard has granted permission to the Boston Fire Department to use one of Harvard's buildings, the former Pepsi building, for a period of four days for a training session. The training will take place while the firefighters are on duty so community members should be aware there will be a lot of fire trucks parked at the space. The training will mostly take place in class rooms.

Gerald explained that a lot of people including Harvard's planning team will be on vacation during the week of Aug. 28th and Task Force members agreed to cancel the August 30th meeting. Gerald said that Cooper, Robertson and Partners and Behnisch would be at the Sept. 11th Task Force meeting to give an update on the Master Plan and science building design. Open space will also be discussed at that meeting and Gerald will distribute information about existing open space in Allston prior to the meeting.

Harry asked is anyone was interested in joining the interim-use sub-committee. He met with Maile Takahashi the previous week and plans to meet with her again on the 17th of August. They discussed two phases for the interim use plans:

1. Long-Term interim uses- Harry identified the East Charles Bank building, Holton Street, South of Brighton Mills, and Everett St. as properties/sites that might make the most sense for long-term tenants. Harvard is going to investigate the feasibility of these sites.
2. Short-Term interim uses- Cosmetic improvements to sidewalks and landscaping. Harry suggested Harvard partner with the city and "adopt" some of the city property to help maintain the landscaping and look of the land.

Ray Mellone asked for an update on the Charlesview negotiations. Kevin McCluskey said that Harvard and the Charlesview Board continue to make progress in their discussions and the status of Harvard's negotiations with Charlesview shouldn't be characterized as a stalemate. Ray said that a lot of the Charlesview residents feel like no one is listening to them and don't know who they can trust. He references a package that was distributed to Allston residents from residents of Charlesview.

Task Force members and audience members discussed the role the Task Force should play to help aid in the negotiations. Ray and John Cusack weren't interested in the Task Force getting involved with the Charlesview negotiations. The Task Force felt it may be more appropriate to get involved once there is a proposal on the table for the use of the Brighton Mills site. Gerald agreed and said that once the negotiations reach a status of being an agreement, the proposal will have to go through the city's regulatory process.

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Harry Mattison raised the topic of special study areas that were mentioned in the NANSP but never done and asked whether the Task Force wanted to pursue the study areas, particularly the Holton St. study. Gerald suggested that he was open to the Task Force's ideas about what to incorporate into the Holton St. study that would be useful to the Task Force. Ray suggested that until there was something to react to, it didn't seem fruitful to pursue completing the studies.

There was some discussion among the Task Force members regarding whether the community should present its vision to Harvard or react to Harvard's proposals.

Bruce Houghton: The community should be presenting its vision and not reacting to Harvard.

Ray Mellone: The NANSP was developed as part of the community's vision. At the time it was created Harvard hadn't declared any of its plans so the community couldn't react to the proposals. Now that plans are maturing, the Task Force can respond to Harvard's presentations and proposals.

John Cusack: The proposed agenda items for the next few meetings are a good model to follow: Harvard makes a presentation; the BRA provides data and analysis for what the current resources/needs are; and given all that, the Task Force can provide input on what it wants.

Ray Mellone: The Task Force will be involved in helping to shape the character of the community, not just reviewing buildings and projects. Through the review process the Task Force needs to continue to work toward the goal of maintaining a working class/middle class neighborhood.

Bruce Houghton: The community can't just deal with development plans and has to ensure that places like St. Anthony's remain at the heart of Allston.

The Task Force discussed transforming St. Anthony's as a community center with possible funds from Harvard to run it perpetuity.

Gerald suggested that the Task Force continue to form additional subcommittees so that one or two people can work more intensely on key topic areas. He asked if there was interest in a transportation or open space subcommittee. Harry Mattison, John Cusack and Pallavi Mande (non-Task Force member), of the Charles River Watershed Association, volunteered to be on the open space subcommittee. Gerald planned to meet with the subcommittee prior to the Sept. 11th Task Force meeting.

Harry Mattison: To what extent has Harvard's planning team and consultants been looking at buildings and open space that will not directly be a part of Harvard's campus? What the Cooper Robertson team looks at as open space on Harvard's campus is not the same as what the community looks at as open space.

Harris Band: The work that the Cooper Robertson planning team has done is very project specific and reflects a very specific moment in time. The work Cooper is doing is a subset of the University's overall planning efforts. Many of the University's planning objectives are aligned with the NANSP and it is expected that Harvard will participate in broader planning efforts with the community beyond the area Cooper Robertson has been charged with.

Harry Mattison: I'm less concerned with seeing Harvard's presentation on its open space plans for its campus because I know they will design nice open space plans. I think a discussion about open space needs to take place with the City. The community needs a better understanding of the City's short-term and long-term priorities for open space in Allston.

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Mike Hanlon: We should discuss whether the community wants to create additional open space or look at its current open space inventory.

Audience Member: The Task Force should be aware of city initiatives that already exist to create and maintain open space. For example, the Green Space Advocates are trying to improve access to existing open space. These ideas can be brought to the open space subcommittee and compared with Harvard's proposals.

Gerald said that he has spoken to the Parks and Recreation Department. He said it is not in acquisition mode and it is just trying to maintain what it already has.

Bruce Houghton: I would like for the Parks and Recreation Department to provide a report on who they permit the park space to.

Ray asked the Task Force to approve the meeting minutes from the July 26th meeting, Bruce Houghton seconded the motion and the Task Force approved the minutes.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.